

5. On some of the Specific Identifications in Dr. Günther's Second Report on Collections of Indian Reptiles obtained by the British Museum. By W. T. BLANFORD, F.R.S., F.Z.S.

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Dr. Günther, in his "Second Report on Collections of Indian Reptiles obtained by the British Museum" (P. Z. S. 1875, p. 224), has made some "short remarks on species of reptiles recently named and described—not with the object of correcting nomenclature, but rather with the view of inviting the authors of those species to reconsider the characters on which they have based them." As some of the remarks in question refer to species distinguished, though in no case originally described by myself, I took the first opportunity, after seeing Dr. Günther's paper, of reexamining the specimens on which my opinions had been founded. I have also examined some of the types described by the late Dr. Stoliczka. The result is that I am unable in some cases to agree with Dr. Günther; and in one case I think I can show that some mistake has been made. I will take Dr. Günther's identifications in the order in which they occur*.

1. CABRITA BRUNNEA.

Dr. Günther is, I believe, right in considering this the same as *C. leschenaulti*. In 1871 I collected many specimens of the former (which I had previously considered distinct), and I could find no difference except in the number of postnasals; and this depends on the circumstance that the lower nasal is sometimes united to the lower postnasal, sometimes separate. The same variation is occasionally met with in *Ophiops elegans*.

I found *Cabrila leschenaulti* common in the Godavery valley near Badrachellum; and I noticed that the very young which abounded in the month of April had always two postnasals, but that as they grew larger the lower postnasal appeared to become united to the lower nasal. It is possible (as I did not remain in one spot) that the distinction was local, and that the young Lizards in one place had two postnasals, in another one; but after the animals had grown rather larger I could find none with two postnasals, although those I found at first all had them. The head-scales in the very young animals are quite smooth.

2. OPHIOPS JERDONI, Blyth.

Dr. Günther unites with this *Cabrila jerdoni* of Beddome and myself, *Pseudophiops theobaldi*, Jerdon, and *Ophiops bivittatus* of Beddome. The last two identifications had already been made by Beddome (Madras Med. Journ. 1870) and by Stoliczka (J. A. S. B.

* Dr. Günther has, I think, overlooked the circumstance that many of his identifications had been anticipated by the late Dr. Stoliczka (J. A. S. B. 1872, xli. pt. 2, pp. 86-135).

1872, p. 89). With regard to *Cabrita jerdoni*, it is probable that Dr. Günther and I have examined different Lizards. Although I thought it remarkable that I should have made so very clumsy a blunder as to mistake an *Ophiops* for a *Cabrita*, I carefully reexamined my original specimens of *C. jerdoni*, and found that they had the well-developed lower eyelids characteristic of the latter genus. On account of its transparency this lower eyelid is easily overlooked; but it is not likely that Dr. Günther has made a mistake of this kind; and as the British Museum possesses Col. Beddome's types, I should be inclined to conclude that I was in error in identifying the Lizard I obtained in the Godavery valley and elsewhere with *Cabrita jerdoni*, if it were not for Col. Beddome's original description of the species*. It is a subject of regret to every Indian herpetologist that Col. Beddome should have published descriptions of his numerous interesting discoveries in Southern India in a medical journal; and it is very possible that no copy of the work exists at the British Museum. I therefore copy the following paragraphs from the description in question:—

“*Cabrita jerdoni* (Bedd.). Two loreals, snout more pointed than in *C. leschenaulti*; . . . lower eyelid transparent; . . . femoral pores twelve on each thigh, &c.

“Only a single specimen of this interesting Lizard was procured, between Cotegal and Cavertypooram. In its large scales it much resembles an *Ophiops*, but has a distinct lower eyelid.

“An *Ophiops*, which I take to be *O. jerdoni*, Blyth, is very abundant near the banks of the Tamboodra, north of Adoni, on red soil; and I have found the same species at Pothanore. It is very similar in colour to the *Cabrita* here described, and the scales of the back are similar in size; it, however, wants the lower eyelid, and differs in the shields of the head, and has a much shorter tail, and only 8–9 femoral pores on each side. A casual observer, however, might take the two to be the same species.”

Now I think it is impossible to read the above paragraphs (the italics are my own) and to doubt that Colonel Beddome, when he wrote them, was well acquainted with the two species, *Ophiops jerdoni* and *Cabrita jerdoni*. I sent a specimen of the Lizard which I identified with the latter to Col. Beddome; and he assured me it agreed exactly with his type, as I mentioned in my paper, *l. s. c.* p. 348, note.

3. *HEMIDACTYLUS COCTÆI*.

Dr. Günther unites to this *H. bengaliensis*, Anderson (already shown to be identical by Stoliczka, *l. c.* p. 98), *H. giganteus*, Stoliczka, and *Doryura berdmorei* of Blyth and others.

It is very probable that the single specimen of *Hemidactylus giganteus* examined by Dr. Günther was a female, and that the tail was entirely renewed, in which case it could not easily be distinguished from *H. coctæi*. I have reexamined four specimens of *H. giganteus*—a pair (male and female) in the Indian Museum, and

* Madras Monthly Journal of Medical Science, Jan. 1870, p. 34.

another similar pair which I had kept myself; and I agree with Dr. Stoliczka in considering it a distinct species. The two males have, one 18, the other 19 femoral pores in each thigh. In the two specimens retained as types of the species in the Indian Museum the basal portion of the tail appears not to have been renewed, and it is distinctly and regularly ringed. In one specimen especially, three rings remain which show no signs of ever having been renewed (the terminal portion of the tail is palpably a regrowth). In the other there are eight rings preserved at the base of the tail, but they are not so clearly of original growth. In neither of these specimens are there any enlarged tubercles on the tail.

Dr. Stoliczka, who examined large numbers of specimens, never found more than eight femoral pores in each thigh in *H. coctæi*. In the Museum-specimens, which, however, are not numerous, I find five or six, whilst there is always an enlarged tubercle on each side of the tail on the posterior portion of each ring. The only specimens of this species I can find in the Museum are from Calcutta and Allahabad: they are labelled *H. bengaliensis*, Anderson. If Dr. Günther has specimens from other localities with more numerous femoral pores, it is to be hoped he will publish the fact.

So far as I can judge, *H. giganteus* comes nearer to *H. leschenaulti* than to *H. coctæi*. The former, as a rule, is distinguished by having tubercles on the back; but this is not always the case.

Nor can I agree in identifying *Hemidactylus berdmorei* (*Leiurus berdmorei*, Blyth; *Doryura berdmorei*, Theobald) with the young of *H. coctæi*. Blyth's type specimen is in the Museum here; and on comparing it with a specimen of *H. coctæi* of the same size, I find that the tail of *H. berdmorei*, which does not appear to have been reproduced, is quite smooth; whilst in that of *H. coctæi* the tubercles at the side, although small, are distinctly seen. The scales of the abdomen are a little larger in *H. berdmorei*; but the most characteristic distinction of the latter is in its very much smaller feet and toes, the latter being but little more than half the size of those of *H. coctæi*. The plates beneath the toes appear more numerous and broader in *H. coctæi*; but the type of *H. berdmorei* is not in good condition, and it is difficult to examine it closely. Lastly, Dr. Stoliczka has pointed out that in *D. berdmorei* there are from fourteen to sixteen pores in each thigh, whilst, as already mentioned, he never found more than eight in *H. coctæi*. It is true that the number of femoral pores varies in individuals with all Lizards; but still the amount of variation, so far as my experience goes, keeps within limits; and I think the distinction, that one species has habitually six to eight pores in each thigh, and another fourteen to sixteen, is probably sufficient to show that they are different forms.

I cannot find Dr. Stoliczka's specimens of *Hemidactylus berdmorei*: they do not appear to be in the Museum here.

Calcutta, May 12, 1876.